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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this report, one of several background papers for a comprehensive policy study of early childhood education, is to summarize the available statistics relating to preschool experiences and school-age child care arrangements and to estimate the extent of the need for various child care arrangements in the State of Illinois. Following a description of the methodology used to obtain statistics as well as a brief explanation of the changing child care needs in our society, an extensive review of the statistics is delineated. Tables provide 1980 Illinois Census data in these areas: (1) estimated number of children under 12 years of age and percent of each group enrolled in school, (2) estimated amount of adult supervision required by children under the age of 12, (3) cumulative estimates of numbers of families with children in selected age groups, and (4) presence of parents in labor force in families with children under 12 years of age. Based on the available data, projections are made for the number of children currently receiving custodial day care services and those receiving inadequate day care services as well as for child care arrangements for preschool age children. In addition, census data summaries provide the following conclusions: (1) increasing numbers of single-parent families and families in which both parents work have resulted in a need for child care services that are provided by adults other than the parents; (2) in 1980, over one and a half million Illinois children under 12 years required child care services; (3) in 1983, an estimated quarter million families required child care services for children of preschool ages; and (4) the provision of quality child care and the environment in which this care is provided is of concern to parents and educators because of its influence on the children's future educational and social attainments. (DST)

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PRESCHOOL EXPERIENCES AND CHILD-CARE ARRANGEMENTS OF ILLINOIS CHILDREN

ILLINOIS STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

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FOREWORD

Several background reports have been prepared for a State Board of Education policy study on Early Childhood Education. This report describes child care needs and supervision/care needs of children (under 12 years of age) after regular school hours in Illinois. Gerald Arnold, M.A., William Humm, Ph.D., and Edith Helmich, M.A., of the Research and Statistics Section, Department of Planning, Research, and Evaluation, were responsible for analyzing the data and writing the report. The interpretations and conclusions expressed herein do not necessarily reflect the position or the policy of the State Board of Education.

Ted Sanders
State Superintendent of Education

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PRESCHOOL EXPERIENCES AND CHILD-CARE ARRANGEMENTS OF ILLINOIS CHILDREN

This report presents a description of the adult-supervised day-care experiences available to children under twelve years of age in Illinois. Many children enter kindergarten, their first encounter with the formal institutionalized system of education, having experienced various prior parental- and nonparental-based child-care arrangements during what have been characterized as the preschool years. These preschool experiences are the focus of this report, but not exclusively so, since an estimated three-fourths of the children under twelve years of age may require some form of adult supervision or day care from persons other than their parents. School-age children requiring supervision or care before or after regular school hours are commonly referred to as "latch-key" children when there are no formal arrangements made for adult supervision during the hours when children are our of school and parents are not available to provide for them.

It is the purpose of this report to summarize the available statistics relating to preschool experiences and school-age child-care arrangements and to estimate from population statistics the extent of the need for various child-care arrangements in the state of Illinois.

Methodology

Statistics for this report were based on summary reports from the 1980 Census of the Population (Illinois) and the November, 1983, report of a U.S. Department of Commerce Current Population Survey for June, 1982. Estimates and projections made in this report are based on several assumptions: (1) national statistics on large-scale studies of child-care arrangements of working mothers for June, 1982 can be used as current estimators of similar statistics for Illinois; (2) Illinois data from the 1980 U.S. Census can be used to estimate current proportions and counts of families and parents with children under age 12, children of preschool age, and/or various subgroups thereof; (3) use of national statistics as estimators for Illinois child care arrangements is reasonable due to the similarity of Illinois population demographics to that of the nation in terms of urban/rural population, general socioeconomic and racial-ethnic distribution of the population, and agricultural, commercial, industrial, and business composition of the labor force; (4) current demographic trends for working parents, particularly mothers, will continue. These assumptions were employed to derive estimates of the need for child-care arrangements by Illinois parents.

Child-Care Arrangements: Changing Roles and Needs

In the pre-twentieth century United States, a largely agrarian society placed responsibility for child-rearing on women as an extension of their roles as mothers and housekeepers. The preschool experiences and before- and after-school care of a child in the United States during that time were almost certainly to be those obtained from close association with the mother. The father of the child would also have likely been involved in caring for the child (as he often worked at home or close to home), but not

to the degree expected of the mother. Larger family sizes and the frequent presence of several generations of family members in the traditional family resulted in somewhat predictable home environments and preschool experiences for young children (Zigler and Cascione, 1980).

The passing of the agrarian society brought manifold changes in earlier structures and relationships concerning home and place of work, the extension of the common school as an educational institution, and the evolution of the role of women in society and the work place. The order or interrelatedness of these changes is not important to this discussion; however, it is significant that roles and expectations of society, and thus of its members, regarding preschool and after-school care and experiences of children have been substantially and irreversibly altered from those of the past (Van Diem, 1984).

Today, most parents of young children find it necessary or desirable to work outside the home. There is a continuing increase in the incidence of families where both parents work and of single-parent families where the parent works. It is no longer realistic to expect most young children to be cared for primarily by their own mothers or even in their own homes during the day (Huber). These working parents are confronted with the problem of securing appropriate care for their preschool-age children as well as for their school-age children for the time beyond the regular school hours. It is significant to note that there have been sharp increases in the labor force participation among mothers of preschool-age children. For those with children aged 3 to 5, the labor force participation rate doubled since 1959, increasing from 27.0% to 54.5%. For mothers with children under age 3, the participation rate more than doubled, increasing from 17.3% to 41.7%. From national demographic statistics, it can be predicted that the number of women in the labor force will continue to increase into the 1990's and the number of young children requiring care outside the home will continue to increase for many years.

Preschool child care and after-school supervision are becoming an increasing concern of educators as well as parents. It is recognized that the environment and experiences of young children vary in the degree to which they contribute to the transition to kindergarten and subsequent learning during the years of compulsory school attendance. As the need for child care increases, so does the need to assure that these experiences are beneficial to children, or at least that they are not socially and educationally detrimental.

Adult Supervision Available for Children: Statistics

Children under the age of twelve years were assumed to be the primary recipients of adult-supervised child-care services.

The types of child care available to parents with children under the age of twelve were categorized as instructional and custodial. The number of children in this age group in Illinois was estimated to be 2,068,744 (using 1980 census data). The counts of children enrolled in preschool kindergarten, and school programs are shown by single year of age in Table 1.

Table 1. ESTIMATED NUMBER OF CHILDREN IN ILLINOIS UNDER TWELVE YEARS OF AGE AND THE PERCENT OF EACH AGE GROUP ENROLLED IN SCHOOL FOR 1980.

Age Group	Number of Children	Percent of Age Group Enrolled in School*	Percent of Age Group Enrolled in Pre-K & Kindergarten
Under 1	184,025	NA	NA
1	178,447	NA	NA
2	168,962	NA	NA
3	163,333	24%	24%
4	162,462	46%	46%
5	160,442	82%	78%
6	157,115	98%	34%
7	165,342	99%	NA
8	172,546	99%	NA
9	191,347	99%	NA
10	185,383	99%	NA
11	179,358	99%	NA
TOTAL	2,068,762	62%	14%

*NA = Not Applicable

Note: School enrollment is defined by the U.S. Bureau of the Census as those children receiving instructional day care in any public or nonpublic school or children attending a "Head Start" program.

Not all children below the age of twelve years require child-care services to the same degree since school-age children receive supervision during the hours school is in session. Children enrolled in the first grade or higher grades were assumed to be receiving all-day instructional day care. Children enrolled in nursery school or kindergarten were assumed to be receiving half-day instructional day care. This latter assumption was based upon the fact that 90% of the kindergarten programs in the public school are half-day, everyday programs (ISBE, 1984).

As shown in Table 1, about 4% of five-year-old children are not longer enrolled in pre-kindergarten or kindergarten programs but are enrolled in school, i.e., first grade. By the age of six years, approximately a third of the students are enrolled in pre-kindergarten or kindergarten classes, while the other two-thirds are enrolled in other grades, i.e., first or second grades. Since first grade and beyond involve a full day of instructional supervision and pre-kindergarten/kindergarten typically involves a half day, the need for child-care services is affected by school placement for five- and six-year-old children.

Custodial day care was defined as any daytime adult supervision of children that was not instructional. Three categories of custodial care were assumed: all-day custodial care for children not enrolled in school, half-day custodial care for children enrolled in nursery school or kindergarten, and before- and after-school supervision for children enrolled in elementary grades one or above.

About 37% of the population under age twelve was estimated to require all-day custodial care, 12% of the population required half-day custodial care, and 51% of the population required before- and after-school supervision. The estimated instructional and custodial care currently required by the population under age twelve is detailed in Table 2.

Table 2. ESTIMATED AMOUNT OF ADULT SUPERVISION REQUIRED BY CHILDREN UNDER THE AGE OF TWELVE FOR 1980

Age Group	Number of Children in Age Group	Percent of Age Group Receiving Instructional Supervision	Duration of Custodial Supervision Required for Age Group in Percents		
			All Day	One-Half Day	Before/ After School
Less than 3 Years old	531,434		100%		
3 or More but Less Than 6 Years Old	486,237	50%	50%	50%	
6 or More but Less Than 12 Years Old	1,051,073	99%			100%
All Children	2,068,744	62%	37%	12%	51%

Table 2 shows that approximately 774,000 children require full-day child care. This groups includes all children less than 3 years old and half of the children between the ages of 3 and 6 years. Half-day child care is required by an estimated 243,000 children who are receiving a half-day instructional program. Before- and after-school supervision is required for an estimated 1,051,000 school-age children between the ages of 6 and 12 years. A total of 2,068,700 children between the ages of birth and 12 years old require adult supervision or child care for all or part of the day.

Families with Children under Twelve Years of Age

The estimated number of families with children under twelve years is shown in Table 3. About 82% of the families with children under twelve are married-couple families with both parents present. The remaining 18% of the families are those with a single head of household present. About 16% of the families have a female head of household with no spouse present. Families with a male head of household comprise the remaining 2% of the families with children under twelve years of age.

Table 3. CUMULATIVE ESTIMATES OF NUMBERS OF ILLINOIS FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN AT SELECTED AGE GROUPS FOR 1980

Family Type	Number of Families with Children Under the Ages of:		
	12 Years Old	6 Years Old	3 Years Old
Married Couple	918,209	566,918	356,645
Female No Spouse	182,760	94,217	48,824
Male No Spouse	22,595	12,491	7,283
All Families	1,123,564	673,626	412,752

The average number of children under the age of twelve years per family type varied slightly from 1.8 children per family among married couples to 1.9 children per family among families with a female head of household and no spouse present. Based on these statistics, the average family size for married-couple families was assumed to be 4 persons per family, while the average family size for single head of household families was assumed to be 3 persons per family.

The types of families and number of children in each type are important because the statistical methods used to estimate child-care needs were based on family characteristics (working parents, single parents, etc.) as well as the age of the children.

Estimate of the Number of Children Currently Receiving Custodial Day-Care Services

Families with both parents in the labor force were assumed to be using some form of adult custodial day care. These families made up 55% of all families with children under twelve years old. Such families included married couples with both parents in the labor force and single parents who were in the labor force.

The number of children currently receiving custodial care was estimated by multiplying the number of children by 55% and by each custodial category proportion from Table 1. From th is procedure it was estimated that 20% of the children under twelve were receiving all-day custodial care, 8% were receiving half-day custodial care and 27% were receiving before- and after-school supervision.

Estimate of the Number of Children Receiving Inadequate Day-Care Services

Families with incomes at or below the income criteria for free or reduced-price meals from the National School Lunch Program were assumed to have inadequate day-care services available to them. Since the cost of daily child-care services would be expected to exceed the cost of a school lunch, it is reasonable to assume that parents who qualify for the government subsidy to partially or fully pay for school lunches will be unable to afford appropriate child care services. For married couple families, the income criteria was at or below $18,870. For single parent families, the income criteria was at or below $15,650.

As reported in Table 4, about 40% of the children under age twelve come from an estimated 1,123,564 families with incomes at or below the income guidelines for free or reduced-price school meals. Families meeting these criteria were assumed to generally be unable to secure adequate child-care services because of financial limitations. This means that approximately 827,498 children may be receiving inadequate child-care services.

Table 4. PRESENCE OF PARENTS IN LABOR FORCE OF FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN UNDER TWELVE YEARS OF AGE IN 1979

Family Type	Labor Force Status	Number of Families	Median Income	% of N Free	% of N Reduced	% of N Full
Married Couple	Spouse In	479,373	$27,827	12%	12%	76%
	Spouse Not In	438,836	$22,932	17%	21%	62%
Female No Spouse	In	117,259	$11,138	69%	15%	16%
	Not In	65,501	$ 4,234	92%	3%	5%
Male No Spouse	In	22,595	$17,614	40%	17%	43%
All		1,123,564		25%	15%	60%

By combining the estimated number of children currently receiving day-care services with the estimated number of children receiving inadequate day-care services and subtracting the number of children who are in both categories, an estimate of total child-care need was derived. The estimate for 1980 was 1,567,033 children or 76% of the population of children under 12 years old.

Preschool Experiences: Statistics

The data available on specific preschool experiences of children are extremely limited. At best, the data do not describe experiences, but rather identify categories of child-care arrangements used by parents. A November 1983 report of a U.S. Department of Commerce Current Population Survey for June 1982 categorizes principal child-care arrangements used by mothers for children under 5 years of age. These categories include care in the child's home (by father, by other relative, by nonrelative), care in another home (by relative, by nonrelative), group care center, mother cares for the child while working, other arrangements (includes child taking care of self). The category, group care center, includes nurseries or preschools or day care centers.

For employed women having at least one child under 5 years old, the Current Population Survey (CPS) data show that 40.2% have their child cared for in another home, 14.8% use group care centers, and 5.5% use care by a nonrelative in the child's home. Taken together, 60.5% of the women reported using these three categories of child care, which represent care provided either outside the child's home or by a nonrelative in the child's home. These statistics reflect national data. It is reasonable to assume that similar statistics would be applicable to Illinois, since Illinois has population demographics, relative to labor force participation, that are comparable to the nation. Further, these data are consistent with census-based estimates of child-care utilization by 55% of Illinois families with children under the age of twelve years.

Estimates of the Need for Child-Care Arrangements

Based on 1980 U.S. Census statistics, it is estimated that there are more than one million children in Illinois of preschool age (less than 6 years old). Just over a half million of these children are less than 3 years old and require custodial care all day (by a parent or other care provider). Of those almost half million children of age 3 but less than 6 years old, an estimated 50% would require custodial care all day, while the other 50% (kindergarten students) would require care for about one-half of the day.

Estimates from the 1980 Census data for Illinois show that almost 567,000 married couples have children under the age of 6 and that there are almost 107,000 single parents with children under age 6. Applying the labor market participation rate of 48.2% for women with children of age 5 or less to the Illinois data and assuming all single parents work or need to work, it is estimated that almost 380,000 working Illinois parents need some form of child-care arrangement. Based on national statistics (Bureau of the Census, 1983), as many as 800 Illinois working parents may be leaving one or more children under age 6 unsupervised, that is, in situations in which the children must care for themselves. It is reasonable to assume that the number of working parents who leave young children of school age unsupervised during some part of the day (either before school or after school) exceeds those who leave children under age 6 unsupervised. Thus, well over 1,000 young children may be left to care for themselves, almost daily.

Since the national Current Population Survey of June 1982 shows that about 60.5% of the child-care arrangements of working women are provided outside the child's home or in the child's home by a nonrelative, it can be estimated that approximately 230,000 Illinois families need preschool child-care services that are provided by a source external to the home. Ninety-one percent of these parents will seek care for their preschool-age children in facilities outside the home. Nine percent will seek in-home care for their children by a nonrelative. In one sense, the above estimate of the need by parents is conservative, since it uses labor force participation rates for women which do not account for those who might work if appropriate child care were accessible to them. These projections also mean that approximately 50% of Illinois children enter kindergarten having had some type of preschool/day-care experience. Children who enter kindergarten with prior group instructional experience have less need for the transition activities typically required for inexperienced children who must adapt to a peer group and the formal class procedures used in the school setting. From an educational perspective, children with preschool group experiences and children who have experienced only the typical family child care represent a bi-polar group in terms of group instructional readiness skills (Naron, 1981).

In summary, it can be estimated that almost a quarter million Illinois parents of preschool age children need child-care services that are provided by adults other than the parents.

Summary

Increasing numbers of families in which both parents work and single-parent families have resulted in a need for child-care services to be provided by adults other than parents.

This need is substantial and increasing. In 1980, an estimated 1,567,033 Illinois children under 12 years of age required child-care services. In 1983, an estimated quarter million Illinois families required child-care services for children of preschool ages.

The provision of appropriate child care is accepted as a necessity for favorable child development. The quality of child care and the environment in which this care is provided is of concern to parents and educators because of its influence on the children's future educational and social attainments.

Approximately one-fourth of 3-year-olds and almost half of 4-year-olds in Illinois were enrolled in an instructional day-care program in 1980. In terms of educational impact, these data reveal that about half of the children enter kindergarten with one or two years of group instructional experience and the other half may be experiencing group instruction for the first time.

Although the cost estimates for various kinds of child care were not available for this report, the income levels of Illinois families that require child-care services suggest that paid services may be difficult or impossible for some families to secure. It can be assumed that cost, rather than quality, becomes a major factor in the selection of child-care services by families with limited incomes.

Current child-care services for young children are not well documented and are provided in a variety of settings for which there are no consistent standards or means of assuring adherence to those that might exist.

In summary, the need for child-care services appears to be substantive and will be increasing. The variety of services available are predominantly outside the home and outside of public school offerings.

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